

Front Page	Ed Page	Other Page

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## Tell All, Secretly

Newspaper editors have had no success in trying to unscramble a riddle presented by President Kennedy. The chief executive told publishers there is a need for greater public information and a need for greater official secrecy.

In other words, light and darkness should exist simultaneously. By what black magic these contradictory aims can be accomplished, the President does not say. However, some clues are available concerning the administration's theory of manipulating information. An example is this report from The Associated Press:

"The process of 'agonizing reappraisal' of the Cuban invasion has produced one of the greatest information foul-ups in Washington history — and there have been some dandies — all because the Kennedy administration became allergic to direct quotation. Plenty of officials were willing to talk, but none wanted to be named.

"Day after day, Washington reporters had to rely on a shadowy 'high official' or 'authoritative source'. The odd contradictions over the Central Intelligence Agency's role characterized the mixup. One source said faulty intelligence from the CIA caused the invasion's defeat; later, another said CIA did just fine but some other branch of the government fell down. At that point, James Marlow wrote, so many key men were cramming under the cloak of anonymity that it looked like a tent."

President Kennedy gave his blessing to the anonymous talkers on April 21. Six confusing days later, he suggested some form of voluntary self-censorship of the press.

The reaction of most newspapermen to the Kennedy suggestion was expressed in these words by Scott Newhall, editor of The San Francisco Chronicle:

"The whole modern concept of strength through secrecy is begotten of hysteria and panic; secrecy is the weapon of the weak, the dishonest, the fearful, or the immature. In the struggle with communism, we dare not employ the same means that the secret-police states use. If democracy cannot be allowed to work in the open, then democracy is drifting toward its doom."